

acre ranch that shares 10 miles of the U.S.-Mexico border, which is between Naco, AR, and the San Pedro River, reached 14 breaches with a total of 29 trucks just over the past 12 months. This was taking place in the daylight.

Between the border and the undocumented, our current immigration system does little to ensure that our economy has the talent we need to ensure the United States competes globally. While there are issues on the border with the landholders and all of the problems that presents, and then there are businesses which simply cannot get access to the talent they need, we have a problem that needs to be solved. In addition, the program is oriented toward providing adequate temporary or short-term workers typified by caps that do not work and redtape that makes them all but unusable. The current immigration system is irreparably broken.

This legislation before us takes great strides with border security. I look forward to these provisions being debated and thoroughly vetted throughout this process. I am sure many amendments will be offered. I plan to offer some of them myself to improve this process and to improve the border security elements of the bill.

This legislation has a tough but fair process to bring the undocumented out of the shadows. People who come forward will be required to pay fees and fines.

For those who raise the term amnesty again and again, let me assure them there is no amnesty in this legislation. By definition, amnesty is an unconditional pardon for a breach of law. This is no unconditional pardon. Those who come forward, come out of the shadows, and those who are undocumented will be required, as I said, will be required to pay fines and fees. They will be required to work. They will be required to stay well above the poverty level. When it comes time to renew their status, they will be required to pay any back taxes that have accrued, and again show they have stayed here and maintained the status in a way that would allow them to be renewed.

Before they are able to get a green card, 10 years into this process, there will be many other things required as well. Again, they will need to prove they have paid taxes, and that they have not been a public charge. They will need to learn English. Right now the requirement is the need to learn English to become a citizen. Under this legislation, this requirement has moved up to green card status. Just to get a green card, they will have to be proficient in English.

This legislation also dramatically modernizes our legal immigration system. It ensures U.S. businesses will have access to the best and brightest around the world.

I have been concerned about this issue for years. Years ago I introduced what we called the Staple Act. I heard many times from businesses that we

ought to staple a green card to the diploma of anyone who receives a graduate degree, particularly a Ph.D., in the so-called STEM fields. This legislation accomplishes much of that by simply saying that those who are here and educated in our U.S. universities will be allowed to stay here. Those with a master's degree or Ph.D. in STEM fields will be allowed to stay here and help create jobs.

A big percentage of the jobs created and Fortune 500 companies that are listed are started or created by foreigners—those who were here and received an education here and were allowed to stay or were born by first or second-generation immigrants. We need to make sure those who are going to help us build our economy are allowed to stay, and this legislation does that.

We all know the status quo is unworkable. If someone runs a business in this country, they are not currently given adequate tools to determine whether those who are presenting themselves for work are here legally. This legislation will make sure those tools are there.

I look forward to this process as well as the debate. I think this debate can represent the Senate at its best where we can consider this legislation, consider amendments to make sure the bill is improved, and then send the bill on to the House so it can be considered there as well.

I commend those who have been involved in this process, the so-called Gang of 8, who have worked long and hard. Our staff worked well into the night for weeks on end to make sure we have the legislation before us today, which has been a long, thorough, and good process. As I mentioned before, those who have seen the Congress—the House and Senate—in recent years maybe not reach its full potential, to put it mildly, ought to be heartened by the process on this legislation. I hope we can continue it. I look forward to debating this legislation with my colleagues.

I yield the floor and note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### THE FARM BILL

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I rise today to speak about the 2013 farm bill that the Senate just passed. I want to congratulate Chairwoman STABENOW and ranking member COCHRAN for their work and success on this bill. I am proud to support this bill.

Last year, the Senate passed a strong bi-partisan farm bill that I was also happy to support. I greatly appreciate the work that Chairwoman STABENOW and former ranking member ROBERTS put into last year's bill and their willingness to work with me, and my colleagues from Chesapeake Bay region States to keep the conservation programs in the bill strong and effective for Maryland and other Chesapeake Bay States' farmers.

I was pleased to see the strength of the farm bill's conservation programs, namely the Regional Conservation Partnership Program retained, and in some respects improved, in the bill that the Agriculture Committee reported in May. I greatly appreciate that through floor consideration of the bill the conservation programs remained largely unchanged. During last year's consideration of this bill my Chesapeake Bay State colleagues and I, in working with Senators STABENOW and ROBERTS, put a great deal of work into improving the Regional Conservation Partnership Program and I appreciate that all of our work from last year remains intact in this year's Senate farm bill.

I have spoken with my State's soil conservation district managers about the new Regional Conservation Partnership Program that is coming and they are excited and ready to make sure that it works well in Maryland. I look forward to talking with more farmers and other stakeholders about the importance of this new program and will encourage their participation.

Farming in Maryland is extremely challenging. Pressure from developers is compounded by the water quality concerns that persist in the bay and its tributaries. The facts of the matter are that the bay is polluted and it is everyone in the watershed's responsibility to help clean it up.

The Chesapeake Bay is the world's largest most productive estuary. It is a national treasure that has an economic value over \$1 trillion. I firmly believe that it is in the Nation's interest to protect this resource. It is in the interest and purview of the Federal government to coordinate the efforts of the six States and the District of Columbia. Because protecting this national treasure is an initiative in the Federal Government's interest I have made providing farmers financial resources to reduce pollution from their farms from polluting the bay a priority issue of mine in each farm bill I have worked on in the Senate.

Because water quality concerns in the bay watershed are so high, Maryland farms must meet extremely standards of operation to prevent sediment and nutrient loss.